

Kelvin Young
399 Franklin Ave.,
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Judiciary Committee
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My name is Kelvin Young and I am the Director of Toivo by Advocacy Unlimited, Inc., as well as Assistant Executive Director for AU. Advocacy Unlimited is a statewide, peer-run organization that is established and dedicated to improving the outcomes and wellbeing for persons who experience mental health and addiction issues. At Toivo by AU a wellness initiative our mission is to bring holistic modalities to this population as well as others who experience difficulties. The holistic modalities offered are; yoga, sound healing, qigong, meditation, Zumba, support groups to name a few (www.toivocenter.org).

I am here to testify against HB 5531 An Act Concerning the Care and Treatment of Persons with a Mental Illness or Substance Disorder. Many persons connected with AU will testify before you today. They will tell you that eliminating the rights of humans to make informed consent for or against treatment options identified by inpatient and outpatient providers is a step in the wrong direction. These colleagues, friends, advocates, family members and some professionals with over 40 years' experience, they will also oppose this bill. You will be able to hear from all walks of life and many spectrums. I urge you to listen to their voice, their stories and imagine this is your relative, your sister, brother, your parent. Take a close listen before making your decision on this bill.

If people lose their right to refuse treatment, they will ultimately also lose the right to make choices on their own. This means someone else will make that decision based on someone else's opinion. HB 5531 also state that a conservator can be sought with the authority to force compliance in the case that, "no less intrusive beneficial treatment" is available. Again, you will hear testimony that will contradict these current methods and they simply do not work! People are dying and some will live with these experiences and trauma their entire life. This testimony provided before you on my behalf is an "Amen" of sorts, because I am on the side of humans, I am on the side of persons who have already suffered and have been failed by a system that wants to place a band aid on an infected wound. Thank you for your time and considering my testimony opposing HB 5531.

Respectfully submitted,

Kelvin Young